



Photo: Tom Felegy

Rick Stone

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CHORD CONSTRUCTION WORKSHOP

Part 1

By Rick Stone

Introduction

This is the first in a series of articles which will explore a practical and systematic method for constructing any nameable chord on the guitar. Starting with diminished and dominant 7th chords and their inversions, we will then move on to other four-note chord voicings and their inversions, learn how to add ninths, elevenths and thirteenths, and finally learn to use altered tensions and double-tension chords.

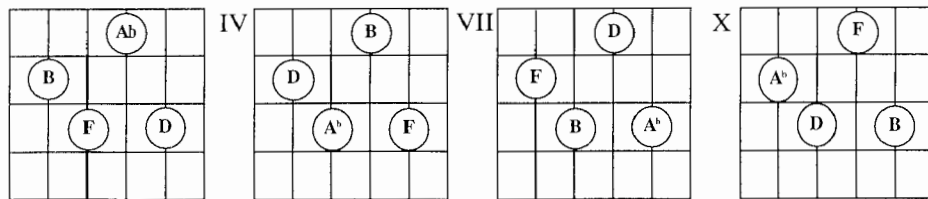
The Hidden Power of the Diminished 7th Chord

The diminished 7th chord is a four-note chord constructed by stacking notes in minor 3rd intervals. This gives the o7th its unique symmetrical nature because no matter which note you start on, the distance up or down to the next chord tone is always a minor 3rd. Therefore any note of a o7th chord may function as the Root. So while a o7th chord may be constructed on any note, when we examine the actual pitch content, there are really only 3 unique o7th chords, each containing 4 of the 12 notes of the chromatic scale. They are:

B D F Ab C Eb F# A C# E G Bb

Because of the symmetrical relationship of intervals within the o7th chord, the chord form always contains the same 4 notes when moved in minor third intervals (3 frets) up and down the neck.

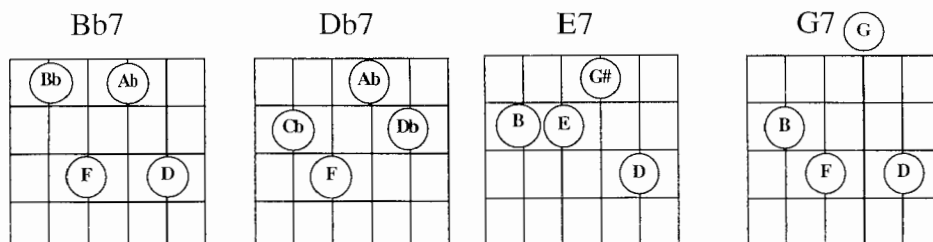
Fig. 1 Four Positions for Bdim7



Using the Diminished to Build Dominant 7th Chords:

The ease of chromatic transposition on the guitar makes the o7th chord an ideal starting point for learning our inversions of all four-note chords. For starters, try this: Starting with our B^o7th chord in the first position, we can create four dominant 7ths by lowering-one at a time-a single note of the o7th. Our B^o7 will produce 4 dominant seventh chords (as shown in Figure 2).

Fig. 2 Four Dominant 7th Chords Constructed from Bdim7

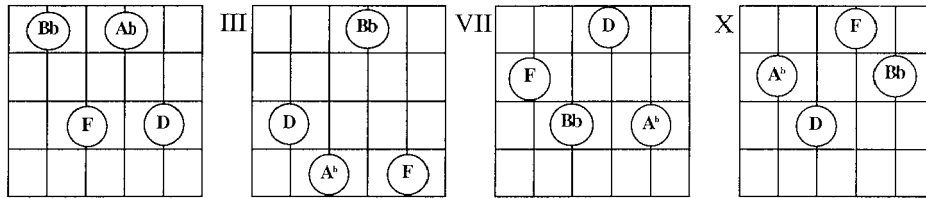


Similarly from the diminished 7th: C-Eb-F#-A we can create B7, D7, F7 and Ab7, and the diminished 7th: C#-E-G-Bb gives us C7, Eb7, F#7 and A7.

Inverting Dominant Chords

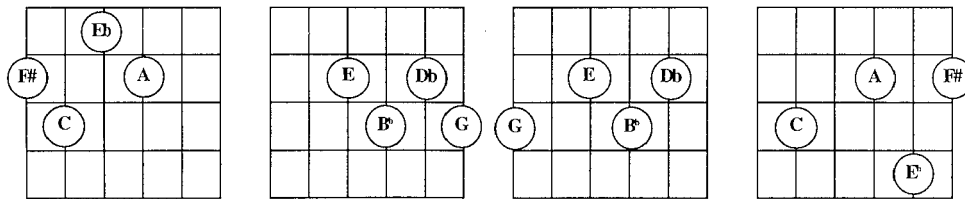
As well as building 4 different Dominant 7th chords from the same diminished, we can easily create all 4 inversions of a single Dominant 7th chord by simply moving our diminished form up the neck while lowering the same note each time:

Fig. 3 Four Inversions of Bb7 Up The Neck



Assignment

In this workshop, you learned how to create all the possible inversions of a dominant 7th chord by lowering notes from a o7th voicing. Using the rules demonstrated in the previous examples, create all possible dominant chords and their inversions from the following o7th chords:



Coming Attractions: In my next column we will take a look at how any four-note chord (Maj7, min7, 6, min 6, min7(b5), etc.) can be constructed by chromatic alteration of an existing dominant 7th chord form.

Stay tuned!

About the author:

Rick Stone is active as a performer and educator in the New York City area. He has performed and/or recorded with Kenny Barron, Barry Harris, Junior Cook, Ralph Lalama, Eric Alexander, Dennis Irwin, Billy Hart and Hal Galper at venues including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, The Blue Note and The Smithsonian Institute. Rick holds a B.M. from Berklee College of Music and an M.A. from the Aaron Copeland School of Music at Queens College, and has received several NEA Jazz Performance Fellowships and an IAJE Award for Outstanding Service to Jazz Education. He currently teaches at Hofstra University, Jazzmobile, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, and Harbor Cultural Center.

The Rick Stone Quartet: 'Far East' with Kenny Barron (Jazzand JCD002) available at Tower Records or send check or M.O. for \$15 plus \$2 shipping & handling to:

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